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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0678

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SUBJ: BRIEFING BURUNDI FOREIGN MINISTER ON PARIS MEETING

REF: A STATE 148408, B STATE 150472

SUMMARY: BURUNDI'S FOREIGN MINISTER MUGANGA EXPRESSED APPROVAL OF ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE'S RECOVERY, AGREED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TOWARDS RESOLUTION OF ZAIRE/ANGOLA DIFFICULTIES BUT CLAIMED LITTLE BURUNDI COULD NOT DO MUCH TO HELP IN THIS REGARD. HE EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ON IDEA OF AN AFRICAN FORCE BECAUSE HE THOUGHT ADAQUATE COORDINATION, COMMAND AND CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS COULD NOT BE ACHIEVED AND BECAUSE HE FEARED ACTIVATION OF SUCH A FORCE WOULD SPLIT AFRICANS, INCREASE CONFRONTATIONS AND ADD FURTHER IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS WHICH, HE CLAIMED, DID NOT YET INCLUDE SERIOUS IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT. END SUMMARY.

1. JUNE 15 BRIEFED BURUNDI FOREIGN MINISTER ALBERT MUGANGA IN ACCORDANCE REFTEL.

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2. MUGANGA COMMENTED THAT IT WAS A GOOD THING TO HELP ZAIRE AND HE WAS GLAD THE PARIS TALKS WERE CONSIDERING SUCH HELP. HE SAID ZAIRE NEEDED CALM AND SECURITY IN ORDER TO SOLVE ITS FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS AND THAT IF THERE WERE NO PEACE IN ZAIRE THAT COUNTRY COULD NOT COOPERATE ECONOMICALLY WITH ITS NEIGHBORS SUCH AS BURUNDI. HE AGREED ON THE

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IMPORTANCE OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE ANGOLA AND ZAIRE TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES SINCE THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE CONDEMNED TO LIVE TOGETHER FOR GEOGRAPHICAL AND COMMERCIAL REASONS. BURUNDI WAS READY TO SUPPORT ANY ACTION TO LEAD ANGOLA AND ZAIRE TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE FUTURE. HE HAD RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION DURING HIS VISITS TO KINSHASA AND LUANDA IN 1977 THAT A PERSONALITY CONFLICT BETWEEN MOBUTU AND NETO HAD MUCH TO DO WITH THE BASIC PROBLEM BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE HOPED THE PASSAGE OF TIME WOULD HELP ALLEVIATE THIS. HE ADDED, CHARACTERISTICALLY THAT LITTLE BURUNDI COULD NOT DO MUCH TO INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITUATION BETWEEN ANGOLA AND ZAIRE BUT THAT THE UNITED STATES WITH ITS GREAT INFLUENCE COULD PLAY SUCH A ROLE.

3. MUGANGA SAID BURUNDI'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS A PAN-AFRICAN FORCE WAS CONDITIONED BY BURUNDI'S OPPOSITION IN PRINCIPLE TO FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN AFRICA. ON THE OTHER HAND BURUNDI BELIEVED THAT ANY COUNTRY, WHEN ITS SOVEREIGNTY AND FRONTIERS WERE THREATENED, COULD CALL FOR HELP WHEN AND FROM WHOM IT DESIRED. HOWEVER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN FORCE WOULD REQUIRE A DEGREE OF COORDINATION, COMMAND STRUCTURE AND PERMANENT CONSULTATION TO DECIDE ON INTERVENTION THAT
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HE THOUGHT WERE NOT ACHIEVABLE. RIGHT NOW THE RESULT OF THE SHABA INTERVENTION TENDED TO HAVE A DEVISIVE EFFECT BETWEEN FRENCH SPEAKING AND ENGLISH SPEAKING AFRICA. IF AN AFRICAN FORCE WERE TO BE CREATED IT WOULD HAVE TO ARISE FROM DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE OAU IN ORDER TO AVOID SUCH A SPLIT AMONG AFRICANS. THERE WAS ALSO A DANGER THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN FORCE WOULD LEAD TO CONTINUING REACTIONS AND A STATE OF PERMANENT CONFRONTATION WHICH WOULD INTRODUCE THE PROBLEMS OF EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN COUNTRIES INTO AFRICA ADDING AN IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS - CAUSING AFRICANS TO LINE UP ON ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. HE THOUGHT THAT VERY FEW AFRICANS WERE COMMITTED TO COMMUNISM AND MOST WERE NATIONLISTS WHO WOULD PREFER NOT TO CHOOSE AN IDEOLOGICAL ALIGNMENT.
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